

**WATERSHED MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE CHAPTER
CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
JANUARY 7, 2000**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document constitutes the Watershed Management Initiative Chapter of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Region 3). This Chapter is updated annually. The focus of this Chapter update is identifying activities to improve implementation of nonpoint source pollution management, development of Total Maximum Daily Loads, and related monitoring and data management needs. A Watershed Management Initiative Chapter has been developed by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board), each of the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Regional Boards) and the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to comprise the Watershed Management Initiative "Integrated Plan."

The Integrated Plan describes the State's Watershed Management Initiative. The Watershed Management Initiative resulted from a key component of the State Board's Strategic Plan (updated in 1997). The Strategic Plan identified the need to improve water resource protection by applying and promoting watershed management. The purposes of the Watershed Management Initiative are to plan and prioritize activities within and amongst watersheds, integrate various surface and ground water regulatory programs, promote local, collaborative efforts, and focus limited resources on priorities.

For initial implementation of the Watershed Management Initiative, each Regional Board identified the watersheds in their Region, prioritized water quality issues, and developed watershed management strategies. The Central Coast Regional Board approved a list of six targeted watersheds (at a regularly scheduled Board meeting on March 21 and 22, 1996), the Salinas River, San Lorenzo River, Morro Bay, Santa Maria River and Santa Ynez River Watersheds. These watersheds were selected because they were recognized as having the worst water quality problems along with existing local efforts and commitments to address these problems. These watersheds are impacted predominantly by nonpoint source pollution. Region 3's Board wished to develop a more systematic approach to developing control strategies for this nonpoint source pollution, given limited staff resources. Region 3's watershed management approach is described in more detail in *Section One of the Chapter*. Strategies for each watershed are described in *Section Two of the Chapter*.

In May 1998, Region 3 reorganized to create the Watershed Branch. This branch consists of three separate units. Each unit is responsible for one of three Watershed Management Areas- the North, Central and South Watershed Management Areas. The North Area includes two targeted watersheds: San Lorenzo River Watershed and Pajaro River Watershed. The Central Area includes the largest targeted watershed, the Salinas River Watershed. The South Area includes three targeted watersheds: Morro Bay Watershed, Santa Maria River Watershed and Santa Ynez River Watershed. All the functions of the Regional Board associated with watershed management, regional monitoring, total maximum daily load development and implementation, basin planning, core regulation, and nonpoint source pollution control are implemented in the geographic areas and/or hydrologic units within each unit. In the North and South Watershed

Units, one or two staff people are assigned to each of the individual watersheds or sub-watersheds in the unit. Since the Central Watershed Unit is predominantly responsible for one large watershed, the Salinas River Watershed, this unit functions more as a watershed team.

The three watershed management areas are organized internally to implement a watershed management approach. This approach focuses on integrating existing regulatory responsibilities and other program activities to meet region-wide and watershed-specific objectives. Appropriate regulatory and non-regulatory programs and tools (e.g. permits, monitoring, education, and outreach) are being identified and integrated to address high priority issues. These programs and tools are being applied similarly throughout the region (i.e., in all watersheds) in some cases, and individually as appropriate in specific watersheds. Efforts being developed or implemented in a given watershed are frequently pilots or phases of an effort to be transferred to other watersheds or to all watersheds in the region (e.g. Salinas River Watershed Management Strategy). Effective application and integration of the regulatory and non-regulatory programs and tools requires intra- and inter- agency coordination, stakeholder involvement, program management, planning, monitoring for effectiveness and technical training on an on-going basis.

Region 3's goal is to implement the highest priority activities. Based on an assessment of the highest priority problems in the highest priority watersheds or in the region, the following activities have been identified as the highest priority activities:

1. Continue current level of regulatory and nonregulatory activities in targeted watersheds;
2. Expand nonpoint source pollution management efforts that address impacts of sedimentation, nutrients and pesticides from agricultural activities and improve groundwater quality in the Salinas River Watershed;
3. Expand nonpoint source pollution management throughout the region;
4. Expand the Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program into a regional monitoring program that provides information on ambient conditions in the region's watersheds and coastal waters *and* that evaluates progress and effectiveness of control measures (for both point and nonpoint sources of pollution);
5. Develop and implement Total Maximum Daily Loads throughout the region;
6. Expand regulatory activities to address urban runoff from municipalities, construction sites and industries; and
7. Expand regulatory activities to address discharges or potential threats to water quality from oil-industry cleanup sites, drug labs, dry cleaners and auto repair and dismantling operations.

Additional funding is needed to support an adequate level of regulatory and nonregulatory activities in all watersheds in the region, particularly to focus and increase efforts where high priority problems have been identified or in higher priority watersheds. Additional funding for the activities itemized above would provide more opportunity for and result in more watershed-specific problem solving. Planned activities (funded and unfunded) are described for each watershed in *Section Two of the Chapter* and for the region in *Section Three of the Chapter*. *Section Four of the Chapter* contains a Resource Allocation Summary, Table A, that shows resource allocation (anticipated and/or needed) by watershed, region, and program for state fiscal year 2000.

The following table briefly indicates the major water quality problems in each targeted watershed. Expanded descriptions of the conditions and problems in each watershed are contained in *Section Two of the Chapter* (at the page number shown in Table 1) and shown in Appendix Section D, Table 1.

Table 1: Water Quality Pollutants and Problems in Targeted Watersheds

TARGETED WATERSHED	PAGE	POLLUTANTS OF CONCERN	WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS
Salinas River	27	Nitrates and minerals in ground water, nitrates in surface water, pesticides, heavy metals, erosion and sedimentation	Agricultural activities, urban development and runoff, seawater intrusion, past mineral mining and gravel mining
Morro Bay	35	Sedimentation, pathogens, nutrients, heavy metals	Urban development and runoff, agricultural activities, septic systems
San Lorenzo River	20	Nutrients, sedimentation, bacteria	Erosion from roads and timber harvested areas, urban runoff.
Pajaro River	21	Sedimentation, heavy metals, nitrates	Erosion from inactive and abandoned mines and urban development, agricultural runoff, urban runoff, hydromodification, gravel mining
Santa Maria River	38	Sedimentation, nitrates	Erosion from reservoir operation, agricultural activities, urban runoff and development
Santa Ynez River	40	Sedimentation	habitat loss and erosion from ranching and land development

For more information or copies of the Watershed Management Initiative Chapter, contact Lisa Horowitz McCann, Watershed Coordinator for Region 3 at (805) 549-3132 or lmccann@rb3.swrcb.ca.gov. Additionally, readers can visit Region 3's website at <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/~rwqcb>.

